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MRS M'GRAB.

THE above was really a very wonderful old woman, at once the plague of my life, and the comfort of it. I met with her on this wise. I was to go to India; that was finally settled; also that, for my health's sake, I should go round the Cape, instead of taking the shorter and hotter route overland; accordingly, I went on board the *Blenheim*, Captain Smith, about two hours before she was expected to weigh anchor, and had hardly time to take a heart-rending farewell of those of my family and friends who accompanied me, before we were off, and gliding quickly down the river. Now, I must confidentially inform my readers that my family and myself are not people of business; in fact, if there is a good and a bad way of making an arrangement, we generally choose the latter way. At the same time, I am bound to add, that we face the inconveniences arising from this peculiarity like Britons, and are at such times full of ingenious resource. We had known the day on which the *Blenheim* was to sail about a month. My outfit had been bought and packed (only just in time); my cabin, which I was to share with another lady, taken, and also paid for, for we are not dishonest, although unbusiness-like. The ship's agents sent in a list of the things I should want to furnish my cabin. I remember so well my dear mother puzzling over a dust-pan and broom, set down therein. 'What can you possibly want with such things! Of course the stewardess will keep your cabin clean.' In my ignorance, I agreed with her, and found out my mistake before I had sailed an hour. I did not go to see my cabin before starting. The most unpractical member of the family went to the Docks one day, in a burst of fraternal affection, to 'see if all was comfortably arranged.' But finding the cabin-door locked, and that neither the captain nor the chief-officer was awaiting his arrival with the key, he came quietly away again, with the object of his expedition unaccomplished. So it was left to the agents; and when I first entered, all was in confusion.

The bed was placed immediately under the

window, which opened upon the pillow or upon my head, as the case might be. It used to hurt rather, when it fell down with a bang, as it sometimes did in rough weather. My wash-hand stand was so placed that I could divide the contents of my sponge equally between my person and my pillow. Everything else was arranged with the same eye to comfort and convenience. My cabin-companion I found to be a little washed-out-looking woman of about six-and-thirty, with her hair, which was whitish-brown, in curls all round, like a little girl. One of the first things she told me was, that her husband was very proud of her curls. I replied politely, that I was sure he had every reason to be so. When first I saw her she was watering with her tears a small apple-tree in a large pot, which she told me she had 'raised from a pip in her papa's orchard' (what could she have meant?), and that she was taking it out to her husband. I need hardly say that it died in about a fortnight—I suppose the salt water disagreed with it—but she kept it all the same, and presented it with much pride to her husband, when he came to meet her in Calcutta, wishing to shew him, no doubt, that though the power was wanting, the will was there. He didn't look as delighted as he ought to have done, when he left the ship, bearing in his arms the large red flower-pot, with its small dusty twig, which she eyed with the greatest complacency, telling every one that it 'had come all round the Cape.'

But here I am in Calcutta before I have left the Thames. These digressions will never do. Well, I proposed to Mrs Sweeting that we should postpone our tears to a more convenient opportunity, and should call in the stewardess to make our beds and clean out the cabin. She agreed, and I accordingly went out into the cuddy, and asked for the stewardess. To my horror, I was told there was none on board. 'Then who is to make my bed and sweep my cabin?' I very naturally inquired. 'You must do it yourself, unless you have a servant.' I returned to Mrs Sweeting with dismay painted on every feature, and told her the sad news. She instantly recommenced her tears, while I set to work to

make my bed. Of course, my blankets, sheets, &c. had all been carefully placed at the very bottom of the large trunk which contained all the clothes I could possibly want during a four months' voyage. I set bravely to work to unpack this; and having at last got what I wanted, I had to pack it all over again. Then I made the bed, and had the comfort of finding that it was full of cockroaches, of a size I have never seen equalled, and which all ran away into impossible corners before I had time to kill them. Mrs Sweeting was quite useless in this as in all emergencies: she perched herself, screaming, on her bed, whence she proceeded to pour into my ear the most horrible fictions of people who had had all their nails and eyebrows eaten off by these creatures, so that their friends had failed to recognise them when they reached the end of their voyage. I tried not to listen to or believe her, but I am ashamed to say I did both in some degree, and shook in my shoes as I made my preparations for the night.

And now I first felt the necessity for a dust-pan and brush. The cabin was in a dreadful litter, and there was nothing to sweep it with. But, as I said before, our family, if unpractical, is at least full of resource, so I at once looked round for something to serve my purpose. My eye fell upon a large packet of sandwiches, which some one had cut, and forced into my hand at the last moment, probably with a vague idea that I was going for a short distance by the train, and was to return to-morrow morning. These were wrapped in a large sheet of newspaper. My resolution was at once taken. I hastily sent the sandwiches to feed the fishes, and twisted the newspaper up into something as closely resembling a broom as was possible under the circumstances. Then down I went on my hands and knees, and with a most resolute determination—of blood to the head—began to sweep. To sweep, did I say? But it wouldn't sweep. The floor was wet and dirty, and little sticky bits of the newspaper began to come off, and make it more dirty, and my broom began to smell very disagreeably. I gave it up in despair, and sat down on my box till bedtime, with the darkness and the cockroaches creeping over me—a most miserable creature. I dare say I moralised—which of us doesn't, under misfortune?—and thought how often I had abused and grumbled over the incapacities of servants at home, and how glad I should now be of the very worst among them. Servantalism were quite a roseate hue in my dreams of that first wretched night.

The next morning, in consequence of not knowing we were to put our cans outside our door at some unearthly hour, we had no water to wash in. This was too much. I determined to go on shore in the pilot's boat, and never to enter a ship again on any pretence whatever. The breakfast-bell rang at nine, and I took my place at table, feeling unwashed, and consequently uncharitable, and disposed to quarrel with everybody and everything, including my bread and butter. I felt great disgust towards a lively young lady next me, who ate and enjoyed three large mutton-chops, and then turned to me to wonder at my bad appetite. I gloomily told her, perhaps she would have a bad appetite if she had undergone all that I had since I came on board. 'What had I undergone?' she asked. I told her. 'But why don't you engage Mrs M'Grab?' returned she in great surprise. 'The captain recommended her to me; but I had already engaged a servant. If

you go to him after breakfast, I daresay you will be in time to secure her.' She then explained to me that there were female servants on board, whose services might be engaged during the voyage. I embraced the lively young lady in a fervour of gratitude, and rushed away with the joyful tidings to Mrs Sweeting. Mrs Sweeting was in bed, and had taken her breakfast there. Judging from the remains, it must have been a plentiful one; both my sight and smell plainly detected mutton-chops, sausages, fried potatoes, curry, and marmalade. The steward who carried in her repast to her, must have been, I should think, overcome with respectful astonishment at her appearance. Her funny little curls were tightly twisted up in things that resembled leather black-puddings, while her person was arrayed in a bright orange-coloured cotton dressing-gown, which greatly enhanced the beauties of her complexion. It was indeed the only bit of decided colour about her. It was a most useful garment nearly all through the voyage, serving alternately as night-dress, dressing-gown, and dress. At last, however, one of the crew, to whom I can't feel sufficiently grateful, spilt a bucket of tar over it, after which lucky accident I saw it no more.

I asked Mrs Sweeting, as the older and married lady, if she would arrange with the captain about Mrs M'Grab. She informed me, rather irrelevantly, I thought, that her father was a clergyman in Somersetshire, that she had been brought up in great retirement, and, in short, would I mind settling the matter. So I sallied forth again, to look for the captain. I was told he was in his cabin, and that I had better go to him there. I knocked at the door with rather a beating heart, but was somewhat reassured by the cheery voice which bade me enter, and by the appearance of the man belonging thereto, which was jolly in the extreme. He received me with great politeness, and at once removed all my perplexities. He had known Mrs M'Grab for twenty-three years, during the whole of which time she had been going backwards and forwards between London and Calcutta, in the capacity of servant to ladies making the voyage. She was perfectly honest, sober, and trustworthy, and a capital sailor. He wound up by saying he should like to put every young lady in the ship under her charge. As there were eighteen of them, I think poor Mrs M'Grab would have had her hands full. As it was, I only wonder she was alive at the end of the voyage. For the invaluable services of this paragon, the captain told me I was to pay £2, 10s, and Mrs Sweeting was to give the same. I begged that she might be sent to my cabin at once, whither I adjourned, and we awaited her with no small anxiety. Presently entered to us a tall, thin, toothless woman, of about sixty years of age, dressed in rusty black, and looking sour and respectable in the extreme. She wore no cap, but had her own grizzled hair, dressed in a tight knob on the top of her head. She had certainly the remains of some beauty. I remember I told her so one day, and was much amused by her forthwith expatiating quite enthusiastically on her own youthful charms, and telling me various histories of young men who had been driven to the verge of despair thereby. If they could have seen her, as I did, at that moment, seated on the floor of my cabin, in a very short blue serge bedgown, and a brown thing which I believe is called a night-

jacket by persons of her rank, her long skinny legs stretched straight out in front of her, her enormous feet, and a plate of Irish stew on her lap, which she devoured by means of a knife and a crust of bread, supping up the gravy and onion with infinite relish, they would have failed to recognise the pretty girl for whom they had sighed in vain. Mrs M'Grab had been a widow for some years; and her family being grown up and dispersed, she was free to follow her own peculiar calling, for which certainly she was admirably fitted. From the moment she set foot in my cabin, she, as it were, took complete possession of me, and I entered into a state of bondage from which I never emancipated myself till I landed in Calcutta. She regulated my sea-sickness, my hours of rising and going to bed (here I was sometimes rebellious), my bathing, my eating, drinking, and medicine, my clothes, and the time at which I should put them on, and the companions I associated with. About the last she was very particular, and I am bound to say that in this, as in minor matters, she was generally right.

'Now, missie,' she would say, as she sat on my floor after dinner, sipping the glass of port I usually contrived to smuggle in for her from dessert—'now, missie, you take my advice; keep yourself to yourself on board ship: no good ever comes of mixing up with all the people you meet here. Have as little as possible to say to the ladies (fine ladies some of *them* are indeed!), and less than nothing to the gentlemen. They will like you all the better for it. You wouldn't like them to speak to you as they do to those little hussies, the Miss Smiths, who run about flirting all over the ship.'

'But surely, Mrs M'Grab,' I would meekly reply, 'I may speak to people without running about flirting!'

'Of course you may, missie, only be careful. I'll promise to look after you, if you'll only trust to me.'

And she did look after me. She somehow knew everything I did, all day long, almost everything I said; and would very freely express her approbation or disapprobation, as the case might be. I think, on the whole, she rather approved of me, I was so very submissive. There was only one point about which we had many a battle: she insisted on my going to bed at half-past nine, and I refused to go till a quarter past ten—and on fine moonlight nights, not even then. This was a sore point all through the voyage, and one which she never got over.

She exercised such constant supervision over me, and was so invariably to be found whenever I wanted her, that I was for some time under the impression that myself and Mrs Sweeting were the only ladies she waited on. However, I found afterwards that she took equal care of nine other ladies, some of whom must have given far more trouble than I did. For instance, there was the gushing Miss Clare, who occupied a cabin close to mine, and who alternately adored and quarrelled with me all through the voyage. This young lady was very pretty, very fat, and very fast. She was a girl 'of great sensibility,' and subject to hysterics. These hysterics were invariably brought on by any real or fancied slight from the man with whom she happened to be in love at the time. As she changed this favoured individual four times during the voyage, I think we may conclude that her

feelings, though undeniably loud, were not very deep. Upon this sensitive flower, Mrs M'Grab bestowed every attention in her power, and coaxed and spoiled her in a way that I own provoked me. I did not so much wonder, however, when I heard that Miss Clare enjoyed the reputation of a good fortune, arising from an estate in Scotland. This, however, could scarcely have been the fact, since she left the ship forgetting to pay Mrs M'Grab her wages, and forgetting to leave her address. But then, you see, the poor thing was so overcome with grief at parting with the last new favourite!

Mrs M'Grab also had under her charge a nervous young lady, whose eyes used to start out of her head with terror every time the ship creaked. During the whole of the four months, she laboured under the pleasing conviction that we were all going to the bottom in half an hour's time. She used to lie awake all night, in order to be quite prepared to meet the situation, for which she was always dressed in an appropriate and becoming manner. When she was very bad indeed, Mrs M'Grab used to sit up all night with her, trying to reassure her; and the captain came several times with the same object; but in vain. She persisted to the last day in being as frightened as she was on the first; and that her terrors were genuine, poor creature, her haggard appearance at the end of the voyage sufficiently testified. Besides these two, there was the young lady who was always having festers, and requiring poultices at all hours of the day and night; and the young lady with a squint, who was, as Mrs M'Grab elegantly expressed it, 'wild for a lover,' in which state I should think she would remain during the period of her natural life. There was also a most interesting young person who was going out to be married. Her appearance was such, that every one was much surprised at this, till it was discovered that the intended husband had never seen his bride. Then, pity for the unfortunate man, and a righteous horror at the swindle practised upon him, were the predominant feelings on board. I often wonder how he bears it. I never heard this young lady open her lips.

Upon all of these, and upon several others, Mrs M'Grab waited with equal care and attention. She never seemed tired, she never seemed ill, she was not very often cross. My private opinion is, that she was made of cast iron, and in no mortal mould. Mere flesh and blood could not have gone through the work that she did.

Her chief trouble with me was, that I was always on the point of being late for dinner. The moment the dressing-bell rang at half-past three—we dined at four o'clock—Mrs M'Grab, having previously laid out on my bed the dress, &c. which she intended me to wear, would ferret me out wherever I might happen to be, and refuse to leave me till I gave up my occupation, and went meekly off to dress. I shall never forget one day when an amateur-photographer, whom we had on board, had just composed a most interesting group, in which I figured. The critical moment had arrived. Every one was perfectly still, having assumed that expression of countenance which she fancied the most becoming to her. The cap had just been taken off, and a breathless silence prevailed, when suddenly Mrs M'Grab's gaunt figure appeared above the companion, and her cracked old voice called out, while

she shook a warning finger at me: 'Now, missie, you come down directly, or you'll be late again.' Of course, we all burst out laughing, and of course the picture was spoiled—no small disaster, under the circumstances, for it was seldom we could get a day calm enough for photographic purposes.

Mrs M'Grab had by this time constituted herself factotum to the whole ship. If any one was ill, she nursed them; if any of the children wanted looking after, she was to the fore. She sewed on buttons for the gentlemen, waited at table, and scolded the cuddy servants indefatigably: all this in addition to her attendance upon her own particular ladies. One failing she had, poor old thing, for which who can blame her, seeing that it never incapacitated her for her duties. Mrs M'Grab, it must be owned, had a decided weakness for strong waters. Nothing of the kind ever came amiss to her: wine, beer, brandy, *sal volatile*—all were welcome. I used, as I have said, to smuggle many a glass of wine into my cabin for her benefit, before I discovered this weakness, and found with dismay that I myself had the credit of privately consuming the liquid myself. Then, of course, I had to give up the practice, greatly to the poor old thing's disgust. But it really was her only failing, and it never interfered with her work; indeed, I doubt if she could have done all she did without it.

When I was in Calcutta, I met with many ladies who knew her, who had been domineered over and made comfortable by her; and one and all agreed, that if they were sending children to England, or if they were going themselves, there was no one whose services they would so gladly secure as kind old Mrs M'Grab's.

TO PERSONS ABOUT TO FIND THEMSELVES FAMOUS.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER III.

THE writing of verse, as a means of subsistence, or even as an auxiliary to it, is absolutely useless. The pay can never be proportional, even in the most prosperous periodical, to the time and thought expended; and moreover (although the reverse does not hold good), all persons who write good verse can write good prose.

Another almost as unrepaying a branch of literary labour is translation. Scarcely any good periodical publishes translations at all; and those which do, of course pay much less for them than for original matter. It is not, I am sorry to say, unnecessary for me to remark in this place, that for a contributor to send a translation to any magazine without stating that it is a translation, is an act, to say the least of it, very disgraceful. It is this practice, more than direct fraud itself (to be spoken of presently), which causes magazines to be accused of plagiarism. Two translators happen to select the same foreign story, and though each chooses a different title, the coincidence of the march of events is of course very striking. When both have appeared in print, in of course different channels, the subscribers to the magazines in question begin to write letters to their respective editors. 'We always understood, sir, that the articles in your periodical were original, but now, &c.' or, 'We beg to call your attention to the fact that, in the *Megatherium* of this month, a paper has been published, manifestly compiled from one in your

February number, with only a turn of expression here and there a little varied.* As for direct fraud, I only allude to it as an example of the completeness of the institution of periodical literature. Crime itself has begun to adapt itself to the system. There are certain scoundrels—absolute Thieves, no less—who make a trade of extracting from the back numbers of periodicals—so far back as to have been forgotten, they hope—such articles as they think likely to be accepted; word for word they copy them, except that they give them a new name, and then send them to some other magazine. If accepted, as is likely enough, they write to say that they are 'pressed for money,' or are going abroad immediately, and therefore that prepayment, or, at all events, a sum on account, would be very welcome. Months sometimes elapse, in consequence of press of matter, before an article can be published, so their crime remains undiscovered all that time, during which they are probably reaping their harvest elsewhere. So systematised is this practice, that some magazines will publish nothing sent by a stranger without some respectable reference.

Next to translations, articles upon foreign travel are least likely to find acceptance. Unless they treat of some very out-of-the-way region, or are of really exceptional excellence, they are refused, because the editorial desk has already too many such papers. Everybody goes abroad now a days, and almost everybody entertains the delusion that his 'Journal,' so much admired by private friends, must be very gratifying to the public. Now, even a stiff and guide-book-like account of Timbuctoo might be readable, when an article by the same hand upon Paris or Madrid would only excite a yawn. To write well and strikingly upon what is well known, is given to very few folks indeed. Not only was I myself overwhelmed by these accounts of foreign travel, when I was a We, but I noticed this class of article, more than any other, had gone through a good deal of home travel. The manuscript often bore marks—such as an editor can never mistake—of having sought for admission at one or two other places previously, and failed. These marks, I would recommend volunteer contributors carefully to erase before retransmission. Of course, what may not suit one periodical may very well suit another; and editors are not always infallible in their judgments. Still, it does not prejudice one in your favour to perceive so clearly that other critical persons have declined your obliging offer. The neglect of such an obvious precaution is also by no means an indication of intelligence. These marks often consist in the mere crumpling and soiling of the manuscript; but there are certain figures, and even initials, well known to the Initiated, by which they know the very office which has rejected it. [Very amusing it used to be—though rather humiliating to one who entertains lofty views of humanity—to get a contribution thus disfigured, accompanied by a letter, hinting in no vague terms that the paper was compiled with a particular eye to its suitability for 'your magazine,' and no other.] To cut the corner off that contains these objectionable symbols,

* We can fully corroborate our correspondent's remarks on this point; on more than one occasion, editors of other magazines, imposed upon in this way, having reprinted articles apparently from *Chambers's Journal*, almost *verbatim*; whereby we first discovered that we ourselves had been previously victimised.—Ed. of C. J.

is quite useless; for We know why it has suffered the amputation very well. It is worth while to rewrite the first page. Of course, a really good editor is one who will judge you solely by your merits; but there are editors and editors.

While speaking of such *minutiae*, I may add that Legible Writing is a very important element of success. It is too much to expect that an editor should trouble himself to decipher hieroglyphics; and let your pages be accurately numbered and united together, so that they may be easily turned over. The folding of manuscript in a small hard roll is most objectionable, since the paper always remains circular, and difficult to read. With regard to spelling, I have known one man of real genius, though in humble circumstances, who could not spell; and very fortunate, I afterwards thought myself, that I got over my prejudice against his first contribution, which was full of blemishes of this disgraceful sort; but in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, those who cannot spell, cannot write.

It is generally useless for a young hand to attempt reviews. These require, more than almost any other sort of writing, ripe judgment and well-seasoned brains; and, moreover, they are usually intrusted to 'the staff.' There is not much demand—if I may use a commercial term with respect to a matter that was once supposed to be something very different from any Trade, but which is becoming marvellously like it—for Essays. Their day is gone by. People prefer to think for themselves on this, that, and the other, and do not desire other men's 'views' upon them.

The only line of business, indeed, in connection with literary periodicals (once more let it be understood that I do not refer to newspapers at all) that can be said to be very remunerative is the writing of Fiction. Heaven forbid that I should encourage unqualified persons to swell the number of those who already inundate our magazines with stories, often themselves of doubtful merit. But the fact of indifferent narratives being accepted, shews how difficult it is to procure really good ones to meet the increasing demand for this class of composition. Whether for good or ill, whether it is 'healthy' or otherwise, the British public are determined to recreate themselves with fiction. Philosophy and religion themselves, when in monthly numbers, cannot pick up a subsistence without it; even the *Fortnightly Review* and *Good Words* must have their novels. A few respectable old-fashioned persons may 'regret the tendency to substitute the meretricious attractions of fiction for, &c., &c.,' but unless they are prepared to make up the pecuniary loss which consulting them would certainly entail upon their favourite magazine, by decrease of circulation, their tastes can no longer be catered for. I must also take leave to say—this being a matter which I claim to know more about than most men—that notwithstanding much depreciatory talk about modern light literature, there is nothing (except, perhaps, poetry) in which our present magazines have shewn such marked improvement over the old ones, as in this much-abused novel-writing. Take any—even the best—of the old stager vamped-up stories of the once famous periodicals, now deceased, and contrast them with the somewhat too 'realistic,' perhaps, but still lifelike sketches in the magazines, let us say, of the current month; and the vast superiority of the latter will at once be made apparent. Some of them, of course, on the

other hand, are thin things enough; sans wit, sans taste, sans everything. That is the reason why I recommend folks to write better ones to supply their place. There is always an opening in every literary periodical for a really good story. All editors are eager and willing to accept it. It is the most foolish prejudice on the part of would-be contributors to imagine that such an article requires anything but its own merits to insure publication. I do not refer to novels of considerable length. It is very unlikely that a man should write a good novel without having already written good short stories. The *Scenes from Clerical Life* preceded *Adam Bede*. And if the good novel has been written, the author requires no advice from me: he is a would-be contributor no longer. On the contrary, the would-be editors write to him. He has gained a very considerable height upon the ladder both of fame and fortune. Perhaps this is too gorgeous a figure by which to express the thing accomplished. If so, I withdraw it. I endeavour to be as practical as possible. I purposely put out of sight the higher aims. I am not looking at the Principles of success in Literature from Mr Lewes's stand-point. I am writing a guide-book for would-be contributors.

Yes: of course Fiction is by far the most remunerative branch of our calling. Even now, its gains are respectable; in some cases, what certain journals denounce as 'enormous,' although in no case—not in that of persons of genius, to whom all of us are indebted for laughter or for tears, for aspirations, for instruction, for all sorts of benefit—in no case, I say, is this grudging remuneration equal to what scores of parliamentary lawyers—none of whom would leave a gap which could not be filled up just as well by some other 'learned brother' to-morrow—are accustomed to receive. It will not be so a generation or two hence. When the law of copyright is established in America, the English novelist will be a merchant-prince. Even now, what an improvement has taken place in his prospects, through periodical literature. I have said that there are about twenty respectable periodicals in London alone; the adjective is a vague one; I will write twenty periodicals that pay their novelists. The prices are very various; one pays, or did pay (for the praiseworthy experiment has not been repeated), £7000 for a work of fiction: £5000, £4000, £2500 ('in two places,' as the auctioneers say), £2000, £1500, £1000, £800, £500, £350, £300, £200, £150, £100, down perhaps to £50. Most of these sums I know, from my own personal knowledge, to have been paid for novels within the last ten years by various magazines. All of these periodicals have had novels continuously passing through their pages during that period. Imagine, therefore, the sums paid for that branch of literature.

Forgive me, good would-be contributors, if I have made your mouths water. It is not given to everybody (I am glad to say) to compete with these gentry, who are skilled to

Make the thing that is not as the thing that is.

Be not too covetous of such a position. There are lees in the successful novelists' wine-cup, believe me. There is a sect called *Saturday Reviewers* who have (vainly) sworn to extirpate them, and who do actually ill-use them in a most inhuman manner. I am the last person (as I have shewn, I hope) to

wish to see you robbed of your just dues; but don't be offensively greedy after money. To write to an editor, as *many* do, coolly requesting to know what are his usual rates of remuneration, is a piece of gross impertinence. If he has accepted any paper of yours, that is another matter: you may intend to put your own price upon it, and not to let it go for less; although, if I was in your place (and I am quite familiar with the position) I think I should not make such an inquiry at all: but having received the fruit of my labour at his hands, and found it insufficient, simply work for him no more. Sometimes—not to speak of the Dignity of Labour—folks get better paid than they expect.

It does not occur to me to give you any further advice. I have told you what to do, and (particularly) what not to do. The rest of the matter lies in your hands. I do not say 'Never despair;' because, after experiencing many rejections from more than one periodical, and acceptance *nowhere*, the truth should begin to dawn upon you that Literature is not the vocation for which either art or nature has intended you. But, on the other hand, do not be easily discouraged. The object of imitation I recommend to all would-be contributors with anything really in them is Bruce's spider. Their motto should be, 'Better luck next Time.'

A LUMBERING EXPEDITION.

THIS title may perhaps conjure up in the reader's mind visions of stalwart, horny-fisted, weather-stained, red-shirted, leather-legged backwoodsmen, conveying *lumber* (timber) a distance of four or five hundred miles, on a floating village, from 'the forests primeval' to the mouth of the Trent or the Ottawa; but, in truth, the following sketch has no reference to a mode of life half so romantic, or a twentieth part so useful, as that of the American lumberer.

Our expedition was one of those theatrical, village-hunting incursions, organised by actors out of engagements, and called lumbering, on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, since, on such occasions, one carries as little lumber as possible. We were at Rethburton, in Northumberland, a large and populous village, famed for its fine scenery and capital trout-streams. The natives were to be gratified on our first night with a representation of the maudlin sentimentalities of the *Stranger* (a version of my own, specially adapted to the *weakness* of our corps, which consisted of two married couples, a single young man, and a boy of ten years old). Comic singing, and the 'screaming, side-splitting farce' (*vide* playbills) of the *Frightened Footman*, were to send our visitors home in good-humour. But we had reckoned without our audience. Not a creature came near us, even to ask the price of admission, although the fiddler whom we had hired sat close to the open door, and played as loud and as fast as he could lay bow to strings for full three-quarters of an hour, in the vain hope of catching a few stray passers-by. Perceiving at last that this was but labour in vain, we paid and dismissed him. As our bills had failed to draw attention to us, we next day sent the bellman round, our landlady telling us that it was the 'genteel thing to do,' for that sales, concerts, invitations to funerals, and other amusements were commonly announced by that functionary. We rather plumed ourselves on the prospect of a good

house, for in the afternoon, Mr Ned Selwell, son of the noted house-agent, had purchased from us sixteen shillingworth of tickets, which we concluded he would present to the friends with whom he was on a visit; and we naturally hoped that his party would form the nucleus of a large and respectable concourse of spectators. He was to 'pay after performance, having then nothing less than a twenty-pound note in his pocket, which in the interim he would change.' It was time for the curtain to rise, when our money-taker observed Mr Ned standing on the steps leading to our temporary theatre (the club-room of the *Wheat-sheaf Hotel*), giving his tickets to persons who were actually coming up with intent to pay at the door; thus foolishly depriving us of their ready money, without reaping any advantage from the transaction himself.

The attendance was bad, and the acting worse; endeavour as conscientiously as one may, there's no such thing as performing well to empty benches. This is the case even when a moneyed manager is responsible for the salaries; and the acting is sure to be tamer still when there is no certainty of anything, but that the night's expenses must be paid, however slim its receipts may be.

Sitting at our breakfast-table by the window the following morning, we had the pleasure of seeing our liberal ticket-purchaser on the top of the Newcastle coach, proceeding homewards, portmanteau by side. At night, there was a very poor muster of spectators again; and heartily sick of Rethburton, we agreed to 'give it up,' like a bad conundrum, and to try a few nights at Fulbottle (four miles away), pending the arrival of letters from managers.

Conveyance thither there was none, save that most ancient one of all, denominated 'Shanks's mare'; therefore, to carry our indispensable luggage, we bought what the Rethburtonians called 'a dick-ass'; for this, the mugger (dealer in crockery) who sold it to us charged thirty shillings; and we had the satisfaction of being told afterwards, that he meant to have taken *twelve*, if we had 'bated him, as he naterally looked for.' Our new acquisition was laden with the male attire, packed in two carpet-bags, arranged pannier-wise; two bundles of feminine gear; a reversible calico scene, having a street painted on one side, a garden on the other; and a black gauze medium for an act-drop; our scarlet baize curtain being too heavy to take with us. The wall of the room itself was to serve, as Old Grainger has it, 'for parlour, and kitchen, and hall.'

The weather had been unusually dry for several weeks past, and the river Coquet had dwindled down to quite an inconsiderable-looking stream, which we had to cross about a quarter of a mile before reaching Fulbottle. The dick-ass walked quietly through the water with his load; the boy sitting on the scenery, to guide the animal, and keep the luggage steady; the rest of the party tottered tremblingly over a high rickety bridge, composed of a creaking old plank, guarded on one side only by a rotten, crumbling hand-rail.

The room in which we were to exhibit was long, narrow, and low. Our gentlemen hung what scenery we had brought, then begged some old newspapers from the landlord, which, with the aid of paste, lampblack, whitening, and a pound-brush, borrowed from the hostler, they speedily converted into a representation of a forest and four side-wings. The wardrobe was then unpacked, and

laid ready in two little dressing-rooms at the back of the stage; the properties wanted for the pieces were collected together, and two pounds of patent unsmuffable candles were set up; then we had tea—a welcome refreshment after the day's fatigue. Next, we made inquiries about music: the master of the house lent us a fiddle, which he had taken from a traveller long ago, for a bad debt; but he gave us to understand that musicians were not to be had.

Just as we were despairing of meeting with a fiddler, a young gentleman popped in, and released us from our dilemma by offering to play whenever he should perceive that the action of the drama required incidental music; and very skillfully he did it too. The room was crowded to suffocation. We performed *Robert Macaire*, curiously cut and carved to suit our (in-)capabilities, and re-christened *The Murder at the Roadside Inn, or the Two French Jack Sheppards*. In adapting the piece to the peculiarities of our company, I had remorselessly slashed out its graver portion, carefully retaining all the free-and-easy, devil-may-care vagabondage of Robert, the amusing cowardice of his comrade, Jacques Strop, and as many of the striking melodramatic situations as our limited numbers would permit. In consequence of its being judiciously curtailed, the drama went off excellently, the laughter and applause that greeted our efforts being boisterous enough to have satisfied the greediest actor in the world. The violinist gave us plenty of characteristic music, just as if he had been the leader of an orchestra all his life: *hurries*, when one rushed on or off, or had the ill-luck to commit a robbery or a murder; *chords* for starts, and attitudes, and wonderful situations; *lively* for wedding preparations, and for eating and drinking; a *waltz* and *gavotte* for Clementine and Robert; any quantity of *pizzicato* to set off Jacques's tremblings and cowardice; and a charmingly doleful *adagio* movement at the end, when the murderer-in-chief was shot (in the back) through the heart, and fell dead in the centre of the stage, and the horror-stricken surviving characters formed into a pathetic *tableau*; his disconsolate widow kneeling beside him, with hands clasped, and eyes raised in supplication to the white-washed ceiling; their amiable son, Charles, in tears and sobs behind a red-and-yellow pocket-handkerchief; and the police-sergeant, Loupy, holding Jacques in custody with one hand, and with the other pointing sternly off to the inevitable scaffold, looming in the distance, for his especial behoof. Loupy was personated by the lady who had previously played the wealthy hostess of the roadside inn, who had been murdered in the first act, for the sake of a green pocket-book, stuffed to repletion with b(!)ank-notes. Pierre, the waiter, had been represented by the boy, who, according to directions given him, sneaked quietly away as the *dénouement* was approaching, to ring the bell and drop the curtain. On the table were two lighted candles; half-a-dozen more hung up behind the wings. These completely illuminated the scene, and we recognised the awkwardness of our position the instant that the medium was let down; a *medium* being a gauze or leno curtain used for spectres, as in *Richard III.*, *Maria Marten*, &c. &c. where the ghosts remain invisible to the audience until the blue-fire is lighted up at the back-wing, and shews their spectreships off to advantage.

There we were!—at a dead-lock, like the characters in the *Critic*. The defunct ruffian did not like to make the first move; neither did any of the minor *dram. pers.*; so we remained *in statu quo* for a minute or longer, the people in front enjoying the joke, and calling out, pretty nearly in the words of Polonius: 'Get up, good actor-man, and run away.' While we were in this perplexing predicament, Pierre, the waiter, walked on, and, like a sensible fellow, extinguished the obtrusive lights, thus rendering us invisible to those on the opposite side of the tell-tale gauze curtain. This boy was to have danced a hornpipe; but having by chance left his pumps at Rethburton, our leading tragedian apologised for the enforced omission of the dance, and obligingly intimated his intention of himself substituting a song, that there might be no disappointment experienced.

The farce of *The Miser and his Man* was to conclude the entertainments: a lively air was struck up, and the comic man had walked on to begin, when, in the middle of a bar, the young musician's ear detected the sound of a short dry cough in the lobby. Whisk! with one bound he jumped over the foot-lights, thrust fiddle and bow into the actor's hands, and darted across the stage like a shot into the men's dressing-room, just as an elderly gentleman with shovel-hat and white neck-cloth poked his head in at the audience-end of the apartment. The spectators rose, and respectfully saluted him; he removed his hat, and civilly wished them good-evening; then remarked to the comedian in a low, gentle tone: 'I beg your pardon, sir; you are the instrumentalist, I perceive. I heard the music as I was going by, and thought my son Nathaniel must be here, for he is the only person resident in our village who can play on the violin.' With a benevolent good-night, and a profound bow, the venerable clergyman departed, and his son Nathaniel* shortly followed him. After performance, we walked back to Rethburton, and returned next evening, when another full house rewarded our exertions in a drama adapted from *The Floating Beacon*, and entitled by us, *The Wild Woman of the Wreck*, which cost us another newspaper scene, with the sky painted on the upper half, and a ship's bulwarks on the lower. Clad in a gray serge train and ragged black drapery, I was raving away as the wild woman, my hair dishevelled, and my arms tossing about like the sails of a distracted wind-mill (for we had discovered that our audience approved of a redundancy of action), to give proper effect to the high-flown speech—'Pity! pity for Mar-r-riette! Hear that, ye raging winds, and be still! Hear it, ye loud thunders!' (which were totally inaudible, as we had not encumbered Dick with the thunder-sheet). 'Hear it, ye darkly-gathering clouds, and bid it dissolve your elemental horrors to the blue calm of one expansive ether'—when, just as I had got to the 'expansive ether,' a burly farmer, not meeting with a money-taker at the door, entered, and handed me a coin across the footlights, with: 'Give me change for half-a-crown, if you please, mum;' and there he stood, the action of the drama being suspended until I produced the required eightpence, which I had to fetch from the adjoining room—Mariette not condescending to such commonplace things as

* That young gentleman is now a curate, and preaches no worse a sermon for having helped the strolling players at a pinch.

pockets. The clergyman's son was with a party of young ladies in the reserved seats (front row of chairs), and we had gone through the first piece without music, when the hostler introduced a wandering street organ-man to enliven the proceedings; and that he certainly effected, by grinding forth the sacred air of 'O come, loud anthems let us sing!' just as our low comedian was going to favour his hearers with *Villikins and his Dinah*; and very uncomfortable he looked, as he stood on the stage, twirling a ragged hat about in his hands, until the hymn was over, and the grinderpest ignominiously expelled.

Again we slept at Rethburton, and again returned to Fulbottle, to give a final performance; three being as many as were likely to pay where the population was so limited that our theatre would (and *did*) contain all the inhabitants that were not either too young or too old to attend; however, we consoled ourselves with the reflection, that Miss Kelly's first season at the *Soho* had lasted only five nights.

The day had been beautiful, but after sunset the rain poured in torrents, and the wind blew a hurricane. We would not have set forth in such weather to walk to head-quarters, but for the sake of my baby, who was much too young to be left all night with strangers. On coming to the water, we found that though one boy might bring a dick-ass there, two men and the boy could not make him wade through it: persuasion and coaxing were thrown away on Dick's stubborn nature; nor would the 'dull ass mend his pace for beating;' and after three-quarters of an hour had been spent in fruitless attempts to make him cross with boy and 'lumber,' the low comedian laying on lustily with his walking-stick most of the time, it occurred to us that the pitchy darkness so bewildered and frightened the poor animal, that he durst not try the passage of the Coquet. We were in an uncomfortable fix. We could not walk home and carry the *scenery* and wardrobe; neither could we afford to abandon them and obstinate Dick on the queen's highway; and, even though we should waive all consideration of baby—impatiently expecting us—it would be exceedingly annoying to be obliged to retrace our steps to the *Jolly Anglers*, in our wet and muddy condition, and with the probability staring us in the face of the house being closed, and its inmates in bed and asleep. In short, it seemed as if we could neither stay nor go. True, we had heard of a substantial stone bridge two miles further up the river, but we felt extremely unwilling to try such a roundabout route. Suddenly, a bright thought struck one of the actors—Dick might be *carried across*! My female companion and I literally screamed on hearing this frightful suggestion; what! across that miserable rickety plank, that creaked and groaned under the weight of the very lightest of our party. Trust our husbands, our stage-dresses, and the dick-ass on that wretched apology for a bridge! In spite of our remonstrances, the gentlemen carried the day—and the donkey; the old plank behaving like a true heart of oak, bearing all three with little more than the usual amount of creaking; and we had soon left our *pons asinorum* far behind. By and by, we found that we were lost. In crossing over a moor, we had missed the path, and night, indeed, most likely have wandered about on that 'blasted heath' till daylight, but for the approach of a number of men

with lanterns and ropes, who proved to be some of our Rethburton neighbours, kindly come out in search of us, and glad to find us all alive: being so late, they feared we had met with some accident. After all, the donkey was not such an ass as we thought: these people told us that had he tried to ford the stream, he would assuredly have gone down, and the poor lad with him, without hope of rescue, the flood had risen so suddenly.

Next day, it was pitiable to behold the damage that had been done in a few hours; the swollen, turbid river had flooded the meadows for many miles along its banks, and cattle, sheep, poultry, corn, hay, and timber floated wildly along upon its surface. Great excitement and sorrow of course prevailed in the district; and as everybody in the place seemed to be connected with everybody else, either by blood or marriage, it was no use attempting to act, for the present, in the neighbourhood of this disaster.

Idle, perforce, for nearly a fortnight, our finances began to fail, and seeing no reason why Mr Ned Selwell should fleece us of sixteen shillings, and not being certain of his whereabouts, we wrote a polite request to his father for payment of the debt; and not getting an answer, my companion and I resolved to apply personally to Mr Selwell, senior, and (a cold, drizzling rain pouring on us every inch of the way) we walked the five miles between Rethburton and Selwell; nay, we had so many *détours* to make, owing to the still flooded state of the roads, that I may, without exaggeration, say *six* miles, which we completed by noon, when we arrived at our journey's end, and entered a small paved yard adjoining the back kitchen of Selwell House, where two long, narrow deal tables, with forms on each side, were set out for an *al fresco* dinner-party; a delightful prospect, and well calculated to cheer the spirits of the hard-working agriculturists for whom the festive board was provided. The rain now poured in torrents; and a farm-labourer, partly shielded from it by a dilapidated sack, that hung over his shoulders, was scuttling about, with a dishclout in each hand, vainly endeavouring, by continual swabbing, to keep tables and forms moderately dry. From twenty to thirty of his mates were grouped about in knots of threes and fours, outside the gates, evidently waiting with impatience for their toilworn meal; while a young lady, with a profusion of wiry red ringlets, and dressed in a smart lilac and white muslin morning-wrapper, stood just within the kitchen door, lading a thin, weak, sloppy broth out of a large copper into tin pint-cans, which a wooden-clogged, check-aproned, red-elbowed servant-girl placed, as fast as they were filled, on the well-soaked tables. At a casement above the kitchen, we caught a glimpse of Mr Ned's face; and he, recognising us in a moment, beat a hasty retreat. The ringleted young lady received us superciliously enough, but condescended to take our message to her 'pa,' and came back armed with a falsehood, to the effect, that we '*had not paid the postage*, and that that was why "*pa*" had not chosen to answer it.'

The gist of Mr Selwell's verbal communication was, that he '*did not know where his son was*, and that he did not mean to pay the money for him.' A refusal, lawful, I daresay, but scarcely kind or gentlemanlike. His daughter had not sufficient Christian courtesy to invite us into the house, to rest our weary limbs, and dry our

saturated garments; so we (observing that the dinner, such as it was, was delayed until our departure) hurried away from this inhospitable abode.

When the weather had cleared up, we were advised to try an entertainment at Pudding-bag (that is, *cul de sac*, or no thoroughfare) Wittingray, a hamlet two miles in the opposite direction to Fulbottle. According to lumbering custom, the gentlemen adjusted the indispensable preliminaries of room-taking, bill-delivering, and lodging-hunting; the schoolmaster kindly gave them the use of his school-room, gratis, a large apartment on the ground-floor of an ancient castle, whose owner never resided there, but generously allowed it, rent free, for the welfare of the rising generation; and though it was a quarter of a mile beyond Wittingray, we deemed ourselves fortunate in having permission to act in it, there being no public building of any kind, and for a wonder, not even a public-house to be seen; nothing for the use of the Fulbottle public, except a pound for strayed cattle, and an ancient pair of stocks, both edifices standing side by side on the green. We had been told that this was an 'early-to-bed early-to-rise' sort of place, and that we must not commence later than seven o'clock, nor keep our visitors beyond half-past nine; yet one procrastinating member of our company would not get ready in time, and it was past eight before we got to Pudding-bag. The houses were all in darkness; almost everybody was gone to rest, save a few young men, whom we found lurking about at the Park gates, in the desperate hope that we might come, even at that untimely hour. These 'hailed us with three cheers,' followed us into the castle, insisted on paying their sixpences, and seeing a performance. Their language was so extra *burry* as to be nearly unintelligible to us; but we could not misinterpret their scowling brows and clenched fists. We had kept them up beyond their usual hour, and act we must for their amusement, or abide the consequences. Therefore, though unable to fit up, we lighted the apartment, gave several recitations, a few songs, and the third act of *Othello*, all in our everyday costume, having neither time nor opportunity to change. The 'valiant Moor' was careful to omit the words 'haply, for I am black' (which he was not on this particular occasion), but he need not have troubled himself, for I am certain that none of his audience (schoolmaster excepted) knew what he was talking about, for they laughed yet more cheerily at his jealous rage and Iago's hypocritical suggestions, than they had done at the previous portion of the programme. We netted half-a-crown ahead; and after announcing a play for the following evening, and thanking the schoolmaster for his kindness, we repaired to the lodging, which we fondly fancied had been secured to us. When we had knocked often and loud enough to awaken the Seven Sleepers, a stout woman, in a large night-cap, that spread out round her face like a white glory, opened the bedroom window, and coolly informed us, that it 'being so late' [ten o'clock it certainly was], they had given us up long ago, and wouldn't open the door again for man nor mortal. Our three partners in tribulation took this much amiss, and walked home in dudgeon; the poor boy was too tired to accompany them; and we felt no inclination to carry our fat, heavy baby that distance (for this time we had brought him with us);

and not knowing what else to do, we went back to the castle, and explained our houseless position to the benevolent schoolmaster, who thereupon straightway invited us to sup with him and his wife in their private apartments up-stairs, and afterwards offered the boy a share of his young son's bed. More he could not do for us, than accommodate us with a night's lodging in the school-room, where, like Dickens's cobbler in the Fleet prison, we might have slept under the immense table, and imagined it a four-post bedstead, had not the chilly appearance of the stone floor forbidden us to cherish such lofty ideas; so a mattress was placed on the table, and our good-natured host having supplied us with heaps of bedding, and lighted a roaring fire, we enjoyed a good night's rest. At six in the morning, he aroused us, and directed us a very roundabout way to the lodging that had been taken for us, so as to appear as if we had only just arrived at Wittingray; for it would have jeopardised his situation had the report gone abroad that poor strolling players had been afforded the shelter of his roof.

Six P.M., and our runaway partners had not rejoined us; nevertheless, we determined on performing; so my husband hung the scenery and seats; the boy put on a spangled jacket, and went round the town (as the people there were pleased to call Wittingray) on the dick-ass, giving out the prices of admission, and also a few playbills. Douglas, slightly altered from the original, was to be the first piece; my husband (though the low comedian) could double Glenalvon and old Norval; still we were minus a young Norval and a Lord Randolph; and were considering what we could substitute for the tragedy, when two Scotch book-cannassers (travelling for a Glasgow firm), into whose hands a playbill had fallen, called, and proffered us seven shillings if we would let them 'assist' in the performance: this was a timely relief, for they knew every line of the piece.

A brass band aided us greatly by playing through the town, to attract customers towards us before we began, and afterwards gave us their valuable services, closing their ears to offers of payment, saying that they 'should have come to practise as they always did three times a week, and now they should see the play for nothing.' The room was choke-full; and the kindly schoolmaster officiated for us as money-taker, and likewise kept order amongst his former and present pupils, giving the most unruly of them, every now and then, a roughish tap on the head with his official cane, raising many a bump that would have puzzled a phrenologist, the recipients of the taps taking no notice of them more than a grumbling 'Now then!' and a rub of the part affected. Our amateurs did not act amiss; but they spoke with a strong Glasgow accent; and young Norval, after his soliloquy in the fifth act, introduced the song of *Castles in the Air*—an anachronism, certainly; though people brought up in theatrical circles sometimes do more ridiculous things. We had no one but the boy to sustain the small character of Anna; and as the tragic heroine could not possibly dispense with a confidante in whom to repose her griefs, I addressed him as Donald, throwing myself on his shoulder at every fresh burst of woe, that I might seize those opportunities of prompting him in the few sympathising lines that could not be omitted; for Lady Randolph must have time to take breath between

the fearfully long yarns she is condemned to spin. After every act, when the band had brayed forth a specimen of their powers, a young fellow stood up in his place, on a form, in the midst of the assembly, and made a lengthy speech; he was always loudly cheered at the close of his harangues, of which we could make no sense whatever, they being delivered with wonderful rapidity, and in the choicest and broadest Northumbrian. Our friend the schoolmaster afterwards informed us that Jock Selkirk's (John Selkirk's) admission had been paid for, in order that he might perform the part of interpreter between us and our audience, there being many lads and lasses in who no more understood us than if we had been discoursing High Cherokee or Low Dutch; and a very intelligent and efficient chorus Mr Selkirk proved himself, frequently drawing tears from soft-hearted maids and matrons by his manner of telling Home's simple story as it progressed. His occupation ceased with Douglas's untimely death; the comic song and the sailor's hornpipe needed no interpretation, and were rapturously received; and the fun of the farce of *Cherry Bounce*, such as smashing crockery, taking bitter physic, putting a lighted candle under a letter when a person was reading it, was 'obvious,' 'to the meanest capacity.' Next morning, we divided the cash (two pounds three shillings and ninepence, including the Scotchmen's seven shillings) into three equal portions; the boy was only entitled to *half* a share, but he had worked so hard, had been so useful and obliging, that we could do no less than pay him according to his merits. Nightly expenses there had been none, except a small item for candles.

Our recreant friends were astonished to hear of our success of the previous night, and claimed their shares of its proceeds; but we could not see the propriety of acceding to their demand, and preferred devoting our money to pay our travelling charges to Whitehaven, the manager of the theatre there having sent us a stamped letter of engagement. We generously made our late partners a present of our two-sixths of the dick-as; and they, not requiring his services, sold him to a dealer in birch-brooms, at an alarming sacrifice, getting but two shillings and ninepence for the whole animal. With this, the only turfy transaction of our lives, terminated our Lumbering Expedition.

VERY OLD IRELAND.

ONE of the most curious books that it is possible to imagine is the first volume of *The Ancient Laws of Ireland*, lately published under the direction of commissioners such as Lord Rosse, Dr Todd, Dr Graves, and—so long as he was alive to superintend it—of that prince of antiquaries, Dr Petrie of the Round Towers. It contains the *Senchus Mor*, 'The Great Wisdom,' otherwise called 'Cain Patraic,' or Patrick's Canon; and it certainly proves one thing—that, Phœnicians or no Phœnicians, Milesians or no Milesians, there was in Ireland a seemingly home-grown civilisation, and a system of laws which kept the different tribes in far better order than the people over there have ever been kept since. It is called Cain Patraic, this old digest of the Brehon law—not because the vermin-evicting saint had much to do with its composition, for he

found the laws in full force, maintained with all the sanctions of Druidism. All he did was to wipe out all reference to the old worship, and to put in certain provisions respecting priests and bishops. St Patrick is the almost only missionary of those, or, indeed, of any times, who respected what was true in the literature of the people among whom he laboured. In the eyes of most of the old saints, the books which they met with in heathen lands, were inspired by Satan, and must be burned—the customs which they found were devilish, and must be got rid of. St Patrick was large-minded enough to speak of the old precedents in the Irish law-books as 'judgments of true nature, which the Holy Ghost had spoken through the mouths of the Brehons and first poets of the men of Erin, ever since there were men in the island.' Nay, he adds: 'The law of nature had been quite right, except the faith and its obligations, and the harmony of the church and people.'

This is something very marvellous, when we come to think how slow even the most advanced nations have been in learning what true toleration means. Compare it for a moment with the way in which, more than a thousand years after, the Spanish spoke of the laws and usages of the Mexicans. Here was a man, probably a noble of Gaulish race, who had lived for years a bond-slave in Ireland, and had so loved the people, that he made up his mind to come and preach the Gospel to them; and earnest as he was for his religion, he had the marvellous enlightenment to see that even these outlying heathen had some truth among them, and the tact to recognise what was good in their system, simply weeding instead of destroying what must have been to him a thoroughly strange crop; for there is no trace of Roman law about this old Brehon code, which, modified by St Patrick, lasted as the law of the Irish—and of not a few of the English—quite down to Queen Elizabeth's time. It is like the old German codes in that it makes everything a matter of fine. When a judge on circuit, after the English fashion, is to be appointed by one of Henry VIII's viceroys to a new district, the chiefs beg to know what is his *eric*, in order that they may pay for him, in case their people 'put him out of the way.' And so it was in the fifth century. St Patrick found a law of compensation existing, and he did not succeed in altering it. He attempted to do so, for he got sentence of death passed on the man who, soon after his landing, threw a lance, and slew his charioteer. 'The man was put to death for his crime; but Patrick obtained heaven for him.' 'Therefore,' quaintly adds the old commentator on the *Senchus*, 'as no one now has the power of bestowing heaven, as Patrick had that day, no one is put to death now-a-days, but has to pay his *eric*.'

Just when St Patrick came over, the Irish were overhauling their law-books, with a view to codifying. It was an age of Pandects and Codes; and we are not to suppose that, cut off though they were from the Roman world, they

had heard nothing of what was going on in the rest of Europe. But what led immediately to the composition of the *Senchus* was a dispute, probably of long standing, between Druids and Brehons. The Druids wanted to meddle in the administration of justice; and the bards, judges, and other literary persons stoutly resisted all priestly interference. Hence the need of an authorised code, to which each might, on occasion, appeal. St Patrick could not have come at a better time. Of course, as he is the enemy of the Druids, the other party make common cause with him. Indeed, Dubhthach Mac na Lugair (which may be modernised into Duffy Mac Lear), 'the royal poet of Erin,' was a great ally of the saint. He, and Fergus, another poet, and Rossa, 'a doctor of the Fenii' (after whom, doubtless, O'Donovan, the Fenian, named himself), 'put a thread of poetry around the *Senchus* for Patrick, and explained to him the judgments of previous authors.' The basis, then, of Irish law was compensation. If any wrong is done, and not atoned for, the sufferer, or his tribe, has a 'right of distress' against the criminal or his tribe. This is exactly like the New Zealand *utu*, the only difference being that, whereas the Maoris merely carried out a sort of lynch-law descending to particulars, the Irish plan was according to set rule. The seizure, whatever it was, was lodged in the public pound; and both parties went off to the *brehon* (judge) to get the case settled by him. Thus, from being mere tit for tat, 'the law of distress' had become a means of reminding chief and clansman alike that wrong could not be done with impunity. 'You knocked my son down last week, and otherwise maltreated him: I lift these cows of yours, not to make up for his broken arm and bruised head, but to teach you that the man who breaks arms and heads must come to justice, and give satisfaction.' If the defendant did not appear within a fixed time, the 'distress' (usually cows) was 'sold to pay expenses.' Of course, the judge got some, and the rest was handed over to the plaintiff. If he came, the *brehon* heard the case, examined the witnesses, and pronounced a sentence, from which there does not seem to have been any systematic appeal, but to the general justice of which, even in his troubled times, the poet Spenser—no friend to things Irish—bears unwilling testimony. The thing that surprised him most was, that the decisions of these unremined judges, sitting without pomp on a green *rath*, should have been respected as they were by the disputants. Naturally, there were features of its own in this Irish law-system. If the defendant was a commoner, it was enough to give proper notice before proceeding to detain; but a chieftain must not only have the notice, but also be 'fasted upon'—that is, the plaintiff must sit at his doors for a certain time without food—then, if redress had not been granted, he took a law-agent and witnesses, and seized his 'distress.' They had the same custom in Hindustan. A man used to sit fasting at his debtor's door, frightening him into paying, for fear the creditor should die, and pollute the house. Troops have in this way constantly gathered round the rajah's door, 'sitting' for arrears of pay; and the plan has sometimes been tried on English governors, with a view to getting rid of unpopular taxes. Well, after the 'distress' had been seized, it was in many cases liable to a 'stay,' longer or shorter, according to fixed rules, during which time it remained in the debtor's hand, the creditor

having a lien upon it. In other cases, the distress was 'immediate,' and the property seized was at once taken off to the pound. It is in the nice discrimination between things which ought and things which ought not to be seized at once, that evidence comes out of such a high state of civilisation in this thoroughly un-Romanised country, as must delight Mr Walker Wilkins's heart. He asks (in the *Fortnightly Review*), 'Were the ancient Britons savages?' and shews that, if our grandfathers erred by assigning too much importance to Druidic culture, we have got into the opposite error of unfairly undervaluing our forefathers. Had he looked across St George's Channel, he would have seen a people who had chess-boards, and lap-dogs, and water-mills (of which he rightly says the old Celts taught the Romans the use), and looking-glasses, and all kinds of weaver's implements, and roads of three kinds, repaired three times a year. They have public physicians; public 'hosts,' appointed to entertain strangers arriving by sea; public resting-places for travellers. One class of chiefs has the care of 'the ever-full caldron, which is bound always to contain the haunch for the king, bishop, or literary doctor; the leg for the young chief, a steak for a queen, a brisket for a king opposed in his government;' and so on. Then, of course, cows may be distrained at once. You probably don't take all the man has. But his chess-board, his harp, his raiment for festivals have a 'stay'; they are necessities of which he is not to be hastily deprived. So is his wife's lap-dogs; and so, again, are his children's toys. This considerateness is a very remarkable feature in those old Irish laws; it is so utterly unlike the hardness of the Roman system, or the rudeness of the Salic and other German codes.

If children neglect the charge of their old parents, the inheritance passes to those who do what they ought to have done. For the sick there is to be provided a proper house, 'not a common cabin, dirty and snail-besmeared; but a house with four doors, and with water running across the middle of it.' The old Irish seem to have judged rightly, that in that damp climate it is peculiarly needful to have one's dwelling properly wind-swept. Tara, the old Teamhair, where the *Senchus* was put into its present shape, was chosen as the summer palace of the Over-king, because of the pleasant lightness of its air. 'The patient, so housed, has (besides the public doctor) proper bedding, plaids, suitable food, and, above all, a watcher, to tend him, and to take heed that dogs, and fools, and Scotos are not let in near him.' So that the plan of village hospitals, just now so popular, was pretty well realised in Ireland ever so long before the coming of St Patrick. In the same spirit of kindness are the provisions for the care of mad people. 'Ten cows is the fine for neglecting to maintain a mad woman; five cows for leaving uncared for the fool who has the power of amusing.' Much the same feeling must have prompted the enactments with regard to slander and to satirising. Both are 'distrainable' offences, put in the same catalogue as 'scaring the timid, stripping the slain in battle, disturbing the meeting-hill, quarrelling in the *rath* (hill-fort).' 'To give a nick-name; to repeat satire, whether for a visible or for a concealed blemish, there is honour-price, with three days' stay for it.' Satirising the dead, and false boasting of a dead woman, are equally punishable. Of course, the satire in these cases is

unlawful; for to make 'lawful satire' was one of the chief employments of the poets; and drollery of all kinds seems to have been as much appreciated among these early Celts as it is among their descendants. By the way, the whole origin of the law of distress is referred to a case of what these old laws call 'satire.' You must not imagine the *Senchus Mor* is such dry reading as Coke upon *Lyttleton* or *Stephen's Statutes* at large. It is, like the time when it was written, full of wild fancy. Now we read about the early, pre-Christian judges—how on *Sen Mac Aige's* cheek appeared a blotch whenever he gave false judgment; how *Fithel* never judged wrongly because he had 'the truth of nature'; and how *Moran's* collar tightened round his neck, to warn him when he was about to decide unjustly.

On turning over a page or two, we find a classification of 'poets,' according to their capabilities: 'He is a chief poet who can compose a quatrain off-hand, and knows the artistic rules of poetry, and the genealogies of the men of Erin.' The *Ollamh* has seven times fifty stories; the *Anruth*, thrice fifty and half fifty; and so on—and then follow catalogues of stories of cattle-liftings, courtships, battles, elopements, and tragic adventures. But we said that there is a story connected with this law of 'distress,' of which the only volume that the 'Brehon Law Commissioners' have as yet given us, chiefly treats. The story is worth telling; it gives such a picture of the times. *Fergus Ferglethach* (the *Grazier*—so called, because of his many war-horses) went one day down to the sea, and lay on the shore, and slept; and while the king slept, the fairies carried him down to the water. He awoke, however, the moment his feet touched the waves; whereupon, he caught three of the fairies, one in each hand, and one between his arms and breast; and he made them tell him how to pass under loughs and pools of water. So they told him; warning him at the same time not to go under *Lough Rudhraidhe*, which was in his own country. Then one of the fairies gave him his hood; and they put herbs in his ears, so that he could pass even under seas. But one day as *Fergus* was driving with *Muena*, his charioteer, by the forbidden lough, he was moved to pass under it; and therein he beheld the *Hmidris*, a frightful sea-monster, at sight of which his mouth became stretched from ear to ear, and would by no means go into shape again; and he fled out in fear, and cried to *Muena*: 'Of what aspect am I?' And the charioteer replied: 'Thy aspect is not good; howbeit, a little sleep will make thee well again.' So *Fergus* went to sleep in his chariot. Now, it was a law among the men of *Eirin* that no man with a blemish could be king over any tribe. Therefore, while *Fergus* slept, *Muena* went to the wise men of *Ulster*, and said: 'Look to it: whom will you choose as king in his room?' But because all loved *Fergus*, therefore the wise men did on this wise: they cleared the king's house, so that there might be in it no fools, nor idiots, nor persons who would reproach him with his blemish; and they ordered that his bath should always be set with muddy water. So for three years, *Fergus* knew not what had happened. But one day it came to pass that his bondmaid made a bath for him, and she seemed to him to make it so slowly, that he struck her; whereupon she turned and reproached him with his blemish. So he slew her with a blow of his sword, being maddened at her

words; and straightway rushing out in wild bitterness of soul, he plunged into *Lough Rudhraidhe*, where he stayed a day and a night; and the lough bubbled and seethed as he fought with the monster, and the noise of the battle spread far inland. And as his men were watching, lo! the king appeared on the surface, holding the head of the monster in his hand, and he cried: 'I am the survivor, O men of *Ulster*;' and then, fainting with his wounds, he sunk back, and was never seen more; but the lough was red with their blood for a month after. From this marvellous adventure, follows (in the strange way in which law and romance are intermingled in the old *Senchus*) a most complicated lawsuit respecting compensation for the slain servant. This is the way in which are mixed up together law and legend, curious hints as to old manners, and illustrations of the 'tribal right' and 'tribal responsibility,' so contrary to English feelings, yet, as *Mr Mill* said, so ingrained in the minds of half the rest of the world; our ignoring of which has caused all our New Zealand wars, and many of our troubles in India. *M. de Lasteyrie*, who has given a long notice of this Brehon law in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*—a little strange that a French review should be the first to notice a work so full of interest for us in England—tells us roundly that our not making allowance for the Brehonish notions about law and land still prevalent in Ireland, is the great cause of Irish discontent. He calls on our statesmen in general, and on our Irish secretaries and lords-lieutenant in particular, to study this volume and its successors, with a view of learning how Irish people felt on certain much-debated questions.

Whatever may be the value of this advice, it is certainly very interesting for people in general to know something about the state of one branch of our Celtic forefathers in times long antecedent to Christianity and the influence of 'Roman civilisation.' From what we read of Ireland, we can form a pretty good guess as to what was the 'prehistoric' state of England—barbarism and 'civility' strangely mingled—a state of society singularly like that of the so-called 'heroic age' of Greece, only with much more of courtesy, and a respect for letters and literary men which has never been paralleled out of China. It would be easy to multiply contrasts: such polish that care is taken that the debtor is not stripped of his 'toilet requisites'—such regard for age, that a son's contract without his father is set aside if the father is alive—such tribal 'solidarity,' that a kinsman's crime may be visited on his father's, mother's, or foster-father's tribe. It must have been a strange civilisation, doubtless much more perfectly elaborated in Ireland than here in England, because of the freedom from foreign war and foreign admixture. 'Rome' began to tell upon Britain before we had well 'codified' our laws, and we are beginning to find out that Rome's influence on these early peoples was certainly not for good. Well, there it grew up, like the Mexican or Peruvian, a home-grown civilisation, very good for its own purposes, but unable to stand the fierce assaults of Norseman and Norman. So it grew up; and here is the record of what it was—the manuscripts dating from the fourteenth century, and clearly *bonâ-fide* copies of the originals; for the text is in the oldest *Erse*, which had become a dead language by the eighth century, when the first gloss was written; and that gloss itself required, four hundred

years after, a second commentary to make it intelligible. Not many will care to wade through the volume put forth by the commissioners. With the Irish on one side, and the stiff translation opposite to it, it certainly looks forbidding; but for all that, everybody should know what the Brehon law is, and how it got its present form, and how it proves two things: first, by the very fact of its existence, that St Patrick was a far better and more sensible missionary than almost any such—a man whose example we might find it good to follow in China, for instance, or in India; next, that, whatever the natives may have become after, during their long and desperate struggle for life and land, they certainly were very far from being 'savages' when first, in 430 or thereabouts, St Patrick began his course of peaceful and conciliatory evangelising.

DR MUSPRATT'S PATIENTS.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER III.

HE was a very small, lean man, dressed in clothes too large for him—a cast suit of the doctor's apparently. He was dark-skinned, with ugly, compressed features, and a villainous low forehead. He wore no wig, and his hair being closely cropped all over his head, looked like a tight-fitting dust-coloured skull-cap. But for a lively glitter now and then in his little black eyes, restless under his thick, straggling, scowling brows, his face would have been wholly without intelligence: dull, and doltish, and animal, as though he pertained to a lower class of creation.

'How dare you intrude here?' demanded the doctor fiercely.

'Sure it was very lonely sittin' there by myself; and I heard his honour talkin', and sure I knew his honour well.' The man spoke with a strong Irish accent: his voice was very harsh and hoarse, and he accompanied his speech with unsteady gestures.

'You know me?' said Mr Selwyn with surprise.

'Sure your honour's never forgotten Thady Cassidy'; the man touched his forelock as he spoke. 'And haven't I seen your honour, Mr Selwyn, sir, many's the time, at my Lord March's stables, at Newmarket. And they said I'd played foul with the drink of the roan mare, sir, and lost his lordship the race. Don't believe them blackguards and their dirty lies, sir. Didn't they get me turned away from my place; and haven't they tried hard to ruin a poor lad that niver did harm to livin' creature? I niver touched the mare's drink, your honour—Heaven's my witness. Sure your honour isn't one to believe their lies, and help take away a poor boy's character. There was niver a boy in them stables that worked harder than Thady Cassidy. Sure your honour's the man that knows it well.'

'You're drunk, sirrah,' cried Mr Muspratt, starting up.

'Don't say the word, doctor, darlin', the man urged, putting his hands together beseechingly. 'It was the poorest drop as ever man took. One

of them vials broke in the other room. Sure and how did I know how it broke? 'Twas the devil inside it, like enough. A big ugly snake, he was, that wanted to turn round, may be, and niver gave a thought to the glass at his side. To think of wastin' good usquebaugh upon such a creature as that! The ugly thief that had got drunk with it too; and couldn't move for the drink! I but just put my lips to it—as good usquebaugh as ever I tasted. The more's the pity to waste it upon such a thief of the world as that. And you're not sayin' I'm drunk, doctor, darlin': don't say the word now, don't. It's myself that knows it's not the true thing, anyhow.'

'You drunken scoundrel; it was only yesterday you did the same thing: you're for ever breaking the vials—you'll ruin my collection.'

'How was I to know it wasn't oil or water, if I didn't put my lips to it? Sure it's waste of good liquors to give it them varmin in the bottles; and it's temptin' a poor boy to leave him alone in such company: what's he to do, but to get lookin' here, and feelin' there, and tastin' t'other. Is it right them creatures should have all the drinkin', and a tidy boy, like myself, all the lookin' on? No—divil a bit—it isn't fair, at all, at all.'

'The fellow likes body in his drink, apparently,' said Mr Selwyn.

'Ah, then, and it's his honour, Mr Selwyn, will give me the character.'

'Not I, fellow. I'm not clear, but I think I heard something of you at Newmarket, though I did not, I own, recognise you for the same man when I saw you on Monday last. "The biggest scoundrel in the stables"—was that what they said of you at Newmarket, Mr Cassidy?'

'Sure, your honour, no; that was Tim Mahony, or may be Pat Delane. Sure your honour won't believe that of a poor Connaught boy—a sober, honest, hard-workin' boy like myself.'

'I'll be no more troubled with you; I've done with you,' cried the doctor. 'You shall quit my house; you shall go into the streets—where you will.'

The man shook his head with a cunning leer. 'No, doctor, darlin', I'll never leave ye. Could you think it of me? Why, what an ungrateful thief I'd be! Didn't you help me in my trouble? Sure and I thought there was an end of Thady Cassidy for ever, when that blackguard tied the rope round my neck; but your honour was one too many for him. And will I leave your honour? Niver's the word. Your honour would not wish it. It's your faithful servant I'll be, for ever.'

'I don't want your service, scoundrel.'

'Ah! but your honour hasn't the choice;' and the man's face was lit up with a sly grin. 'Why did you bring me back to life, without a word as to whether I'd like it or no, if it wasn't to care for and preserve me afterwards? Sure I'll niver leave your honour: how could I be so ungrateful? Hasn't your honour been a mother to me, and given me life a second time? Faith, 'twas more than my mother could do, was that same: she niver was sober enough—rest her soul—poor woman. And would your honour now be for desertin' me? Sure your honour couldn't think of it, and Thady Cassidy isn't the boy that would be lettin' your

honour do it, if you wanted it niver so. You'll have a faithful servant for ever by your side, doctor, darlin', henceforth, anyhow. Thady Cassidy will niver leave ye.'

Mr Muspratt moved about in his chair uneasily. 'Upon what charge were you condemned, Mr Cassidy? 'Twas for no trespass against my Lord March, I trust?' said Mr Selwyn.

'Would I hurt his lordship? Does your honour think it of me? Sure it's months since I left his lordship's, and came to London. And thin—the lying spalpeens—they said I stole a sheep.'

'And you didn't?'

'Save your honour, 'twas but a lamb! Why would I be stealin' a sheep, I'd like to know? 'Twas crossin' Tothill Fields, I was, and I heard the poor thing bleatin'. How could I bear to hear it? So I took the creature in my arms, to help find its dam for it; but I couldn't. And thin I brought it home wid me; and them Bow Street scoundrels came after me, and they said I stole it, the dirty vagabonds; and they tried me for it, and found me guilty, bad-luck to them. Faith, it's like a dream to think of now! 'Twas hard upon a poor boy they were, that had done no harm at all, at all. And thin—to think of it!—I stepped into the cart—there was others there beside me; mighty easy they took it too, as though hangin' were no such great matter after all, and smart they were, with ribbon to tie their hair, and powder on it, and plated buckles to their shoes, and a ruffle to their wrists; and the chaplain came too, a soft-spoken, comfortin' man he was, only I couldn't hear him well for the rumblin' of the cart, and the roarin' of the crowd, and 'twas bad I felt; and oh, Thady Cassidy, I said, poor boy, it's over wid ye now anyhow! And my hand trimbled so, I niver saw the like; do what I would, I couldn't hinder it. And thin a purty girl—bless her sweet face—gave me a posey to hold in one hand, and some one pushed a Prayer-book into the other, and thin they bade me God-speed! We stopped on the way, to drink a sip from St Giles's bowl; but I hadn't much heart for the drink—it niver went so much 'gainst my stomach. But the chaplain—he was a civil gentleman—he took my share. Sure 'twas very welcome he was. Such a wet mornin' too, and the long journey it was, and thin I thought my turn would niver come; and cold I was wid my hands tied together in the small of my back, waitin' for the cart to go from under me.—What thin? Sure I can't tell your honour now. There was lighted candles and sparks, and bright red clouds dancin' before my eyes; and thin there was pins and needles all over me, and the doctor pourin' hot water on me, and blisterin' the nape of my neck, and rubbin' me with hot flannels, and lettin' blood from my arm; and O the trouble I gave him, and the pain it was to me! And will I ever forget it? and will I ever quit him? Sure it's Thady Cassidy is his faithful servant for ever.'

The doctor groaned. Mr Selwyn smiled.

'Are you satisfied?' asked Mr Muspratt.

'Really, a very charming story. Our friend has quite a genius for narrative.'

'Will you take him for your body-servant, Mr Selwyn?' asked the doctor grimly.

'Thank you—no. I couldn't think of depriving your collection of so singular a specimen.'

'Of what use is he to me now?' demanded the surgeon with a moan.

'Indeed, I hardly know. In spite of the act of parliament, you can hardly dissect a living man, I presume.'

'It would afford much curious study, however,' observed Mr Muspratt meditatively.

'You've been indiscreet, I fear, my dear sir; you have been really quite thoughtless. If it was indeed necessary to preserve our criminal friend, would it not have done to have had him stuffed, or to have enclosed him in a spirit-vial? In either of those forms, I think he would have proved almost as engaging as at present. Charmed as I am with his society now, I have no doubt my friends would give me credit for preferring him as I saw him on Monday last, after Mr Ketch had operated upon him. I did not then know how very clumsily and incompletely that worthy had performed his functions. About the defunct, there is ever a charm and an interest—not to mention an exquisite repose of manner. Would we could say as much for the living!'

Mr Cassidy glanced from the doctor to his visitor; it was only in part he comprehended the bearing of Mr Selwyn's observations. In a puzzled way, he rubbed his hand over his closely clipped head.

'Would he have me stuffed, thin? Faith, 'twould be hard upon the poor boy. Am I a bird or a beast, thin, that I'm to be stuffed?' he asked.

'A beast, Mr Cassidy, decidedly, if you will insist upon my opinion,' said Mr Selwyn.

'Put me in a bottle thin, like them snakes and monsters on the shelf yonder, and fill me up with usquebaugh, and leave the cork out, that I may take a drink whin I'm thirsty—I'll not complain so much about that; but for stuffin' me, sure it's dry dull work at the best.'

Mr Muspratt rose. 'Enough of this. Leave the room, sirrah. I forbade your entering this apartment.'

'Sure I'll go, doctor, darlin', said Mr Cassidy; 'it's your faithful servant you're speakin' to. It was no offence I meant. I'll be quiet as a lamb.'

'As the lamb you stole,' suggested Mr Selwyn.

'Ah! your honour knows that same was a bleatin' beast, and the trouble it brought me to, bad-luck to it.—I'm gone, doctor, darlin'—I'm gone.' And Mr Cassidy withdrew.

'Are you satisfied, Mr Selwyn?' asked the doctor.

'Perfectly,' and Mr Selwyn resumed his hat, and cane, and gloves, and prepared to depart. 'How can I ever repay you for the entertainment you have afforded me?' he asked as he stood at the door.

'By never coming near me again,' the doctor answered quickly.

'My dear sir, the price is far beyond my means. You overrate my powers of forbearance; you ask me to do that which is clearly impossible.'

'I need have patience!' exclaimed Mr Muspratt.

'Of course, patience—a virtue especially necessary to medical men.' He pronounced the word *patients*. Mr George Selwyn was the maker of many jokes, good and bad.

He tripped lightly down Mr Muspratt's doorstep, and took his seat in his sedan-chair. 'To Mr Walpole's, Arlington Street,' he said, and he was carried off.

CHAPTER IV.

It was hard upon Mr Muspratt. Why should his reclusive, studious life be thus disturbed and invaded? First, by this terrible Irishman, whom he had restored to life, and who, therefore, with droll logic, insisted upon his right thenceforward—for ever—to sustenance at the hands of his benefactor; and secondly, by Mr George Selwyn, whose gay presence seemed so strangely out of place in the doctor's dusty, dreary rooms in Great Newport Street; whose quips and levities found fitting echoes at the clubs and chocolate-houses, the drums of women of quality, and the haunts of fashion; but in Mr Muspratt's museum, amid the curiosities of comparative anatomy, had an effect sufficiently incongruous. And Mr Selwyn returned to Great Newport Street again and again. His sedan-chair was often at the doctor's door. He was charmed; he had found a man upon whom his jokes fell utterly dead, who never even affected to understand them—but ignored them, stepped over without seeing, and passed them by. It was a new sensation to Mr Selwyn. He began to weary of the applauded jest, especially as he knew by experience the loudest applause came generally from the man who the least comprehended what he applauded. To the conventional jester, applause is as the air he breathes: withhold your laughter, and bitter chagrin possesses him wholly. But Mr Selwyn flattered himself he was not a conventional jester. His sallies would be as happy, he fancied, in the solitude of a dungeon as in the most crowded *salon*. His pleasantries were for his own pleasure. Bystanders might laugh if they listed; it was nothing to him. He could dispense with their laughter as with their presence. So, for the moment, he amused himself in the society of Mr Muspratt; and chatted and bantered after his usual serious facetious fashion.

Strange that Mr Muspratt should tolerate such a visitor. Was the doctor not often tempted to deny himself, or to lead Mr Selwyn, instantly on his arrival, back to his sedan-chair, bidding him come no more to Great Newport Street? The doctor was not a meek man in general. He was dreamy, abstracted, absorbed, yet he evinced at times a studious man's irascibility. He bore with Mr Selwyn, however: not much comprehending him, regarding him with a sort of half-scornful amazement, as a specimen of a kind of creature he had not met with before: not valuable, you understand, but new, and therefore worth pinning on to a cork, as it were, and contemplating now and then at leisure moments, with a view to classification and determination of nature and habits. It is possible, too, that there lingered about the doctor a sort of unconscious reverence for Mr Selwyn's social position. Medical science had not long taken rank as a great thing; the world had only recently agreed to regard the faculty with favour. The doctor of the period had only of late date shaken himself free of degrading connection with the barber, the quack, the astrologer. It might be that Mr Muspratt, though sturdy and steadfast enough as to other matters, and not especially nice as to what he said, or to whom he said it, hesitated about openly affronting so grand a gentleman as Mr Selwyn—the associate of the aristocracy, the intimate friend of the great, the member of parliament for the doctor's native city of Gloucester, and a placeholder under government. To deal with him

simply and curtly was one thing, but to shew him to the door, and bid him begone about his business, was another and a different—rather more than the doctor was prepared to undertake, in short. For these mixed reasons, though he withheld his vote, and stoutly outspoke his objection to place-holding, and would rather have been without such visits, Mr Muspratt endured the incursions of Mr George Selwyn.

A greater source of discomfort and uneasiness to Mr Muspratt arose from the conduct of his patient, Mr Cassidy. This man had firmly planted himself in the doctor's household; all efforts to outroot him were in vain. He proclaimed himself Mr Muspratt's servant for life, and maintained that no month's warning, or notice to quit, was applicable to his case. The doctor having given him life, was bound to give him wherewithal to sustain that life. In return, he was willing to render such service as he could. But by this feudal sort of arrangement, the doctor was a positive loser. Not only were Mr Cassidy's services altogether superfluous and valueless, but his conduct was ruinously detrimental to Mr Muspratt's interests. Mr Cassidy's partiality for ardent spirits amounted to an absolute passion; he was seldom sober; whatever he laid hands upon, he as certainly broke; his dealings with the doctor's museum and collections were of the most desperate character; his inability to discriminate between spirits of wine and usquebaugh betrayed him on the one hand into a continuous state of intoxication, and on the other, into committing the most ruthless ravages upon his patron's vials. Then a cunning suspicion had taken hold of him; he fancied that the doctor in some way contemplated getting the better of and betraying him. He conceived there was an intention to evade his claim for support, and to turn him adrift at the first convenient opportunity. He bestirred himself, therefore, to counteract and defeat these supposititious designs. He kept unceasing watch upon Mr Muspratt and his movements. When the doctor left the house, he was followed by a sort of uncomely shadow in the form of his faithful servant, Thady Cassidy, armed with a bludgeon, and looking uncommonly like a foot-pad, or at the best, a bailiff. While attending to his patients at St Bartholomew's, or lecturing the students, the doctor's servant was waiting for him at the door of the hospital, looking eagerly for his egress again. In his own house, Mr Muspratt's tormentor was ever at his elbow, leering at and nodding to him, by way of assuring him that any attempt to escape surveillance would be utterly vain. Of course a word spoken to the officers of justice would have consigned Mr Cassidy to Newgate and the sharp mercies of Tyburn Tree, again; but Mr Muspratt could not bring himself to adopt such a course, even if he was quite aware, which was doubtful, that so speedy and effectual a remedial measure was within his reach. Meanwhile, it must be said of him, that, contemplating his servant, and writhing as he was apt to do under the affliction of his presence, Mr Muspratt was apt to fidget about with his lancets a good deal, as though beset sometimes with sore vivisectional temptations in regard to Mr Cassidy.

But the doctor had his occupations and distractions. He had mounted a hobbyhorse, and was taking a good gallop upon it. His hobbyhorse was of a therapeutical character, so to speak; was in keeping with its rider's professional position.

Mr Muspratt was studying strangulation as a disease; its diagnosis, treatment, and cure. His success in the case of Mr Cassidy (its results had been so inconvenient) had been almost enough to deter him from the further prosecution of his inquiries. But Mr Muspratt was possessed by an insatiable hunger and thirst after knowledge. He was prepared, if need was, to offer up his domestic peace and comfort upon the altar of science. He sought other patients who had suffered as Mr Cassidy had suffered—there was no lack of them in those days. Justice then sat with a bundle of halts in her lap, and dispensed them liberally to the culprits brought before her. Hardly a morning passed but a cart was driven away from Newgate, and a wretched group of victims rode backwards up Holborn Hill, 'to dance the Paddington frisk,' as the phrase was, or 'to die like a trooper's horse,' that is, with their shoes on their feet, at Tyburn Tree. They rode backwards, as some held, to increase the ignominy of their punishment; but perhaps it was for a more merciful reason: to conceal from them up to the last moment the view of the clumsy structure—the three posts driven into the ground, with three transverse beams laid over them—the 'Three-legged Mare,' upon which they were to suffer. Let the curious in such matters turn to Hogarth's plate of 'Tom Idle going to Execution' for an idea of London's way of dealing with its criminal classes a century ago.

Mr Muspratt was now constantly at Tyburn in the early mornings. The law, its own particular demands satisfied, affected an interest in medicine. The strangled malefactor was handed over to Surgeons' Hall, in the Old Bailey, by virtue of a special act of parliament. Surgeons' Hall was thus furnished with more 'subjects' than it well knew what to do with. At Surgeons' Hall, our friend Vicesimus Muspratt was an influential personage. The expression of a wish, and a little adroit management on his part, and there was no difficulty about now and then conveying a subject from Tyburn to Great Newport Street, instead of straight to Surgeons' Hall. Of course, the subject eventually found its way to Surgeons' Hall; at any rate, a subject did. The surgeons were not particular as to identity; for their purposes, one malefactor, or one subject, was as good as another. Subjects were becoming a drug. The resurrection-men were complaining loudly of the falling-off in their trade, and of the legislative interference with the simple dealings of honest men. They looked eagerly out for business. A wink from a medical gentleman was very intelligible to them, and quickly brought about important results. So it happened that while one Thady Cassidy was deemed to have been duly operated upon by the knives and lancets of the profession at Surgeons' Hall, and exposed afterwards, according to custom, to the gaze of a marvelling and slightly horrified multitude, another Thady Cassidy was walking about alive and well, and abominably mischievous, on the premises of Mr Muspratt.

For some time, the doctor did not have such another success. Various attempts at resuscitation upon various subjects proved altogether abortive. The doctor began to despair. Was it all mere accident? he asked himself. He measured Mr Cassidy, and weighed him, and tested his respiratory powers, and the action of his heart. He looked out for subjects corresponding as nearly as possible to the

case of Mr Cassidy. He wanted to arrive at a system—to establish laws, and fix principles. He meditated a treatise upon the Economy of Strangulation; but as yet he found himself deficient in material for such a work.

WINTER'S HARVEST.

PURE and blue is the broad, broad sky—
Cold and hard as a sapphire stone;
The flowers are all of them frozen and black,
And we seem left alone.

Now Summer's toil
Is Winter's spoil,
And the leaves are gathering in.

The poplar's turned to a pillar of gold;
The alder's crimson and dead;
The beech is brazen and glowing;
The aycamore's rusty red.

The glory's gone;
The year fades on;
And the leaves are gathering in.

In the cold and peaceful sunshine,
The dead leaves fill the skies,
Floating, floating, drifting,
Like golden butterflies.

For Summer's toil
Is Winter's spoil;
Time's harvest is gathering in.

The Novel, BROUGHT TO LIGHT, now finished, will be followed, in January 1867, by another ORIGINAL SERIAL TALE, by the Author of LADY FLAVIA, entitled

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